

TEAMMATESSM

MENTORING
of LINCOLN

Mentor Handbook

LincolnTeamMates.org

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Table of Contents

Overview of Mentoring	3
▪ About the TeamMates Program	4
▪ Steps to Becoming a TeamMates Mentor	6
▪ Who Will I Be Mentoring	7
▪ Mentoring and Commitment.....	8
▪ Mentee/Mentor Agreement.....	9
▪ School Orientation Form.....	10
Building a Relationship	11
▪ Developmental vs. Prescriptive Mentoring	12
▪ Building Trust	14
▪ What Young People Need from Caring Adults.....	15
▪ The Developmental Relationships Framework.....	17
▪ Stages of a Relationship	18
▪ A Mentor’s Roles.....	20
▪ Exploring Diversity	22
▪ The Myth and Facts About Poverty	23
▪ Signs of Success.....	25
Boundaries	27
▪ Safe Environment.....	28
▪ Social Media, Time, and Money Boundaries	29

- Self-Disclosure Boundaries31
- Boundaries with Parents and Families and School Boundaries.....32
- Confidentiality/Non-Disclosure Acknowledgement33
- Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse34
- Signs of Depression and Possible Suicide Risk38
- Guidelines for Difficult Situations39
- You Are Part of a Team40
- Summary of TeamMates Policies.....41

- Activities 43**
- Getting Started.....44
- Activities for Elementary Students51
- Activities for Secondary Students52
- Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset.....53
- Strengths-Focused Mentoring57
- Developmental Assets58
- Sparks 60
- Setting and Reaching Goals..... 61
- Problem-Solving..... 62

- Mentoring Resources..... 63**
- Assistance for Specific Mentee Issues64
- Important Contact Information..... 66**

An Overview of Mentoring

*In Homer's epic poem **The Odyssey**, Odysseus asks his trusted friend, Mentor, to watch over his household and guide the development of his son, Telemachus. Throughout Telemachus' life, Mentor advises him and serves as his instructor and role model. Mentor eventually prepares Telemachus for his own journey into the world, providing encouragement and offering to accompany him. The ancient Greeks knew the value of a mentor in the life of a child.*

What is Mentoring?

Webster's New World Dictionary defines a mentor as "a person looked upon for wise advice and guidance." Though a mentor may be a role model, a true mentor does not ask another person to "be like me." A mentor says, "I will help you be whoever you wish to be."

For centuries, young people have benefited from the guidance provided by older and/or more experienced persons, whether the mentoring relationships were informal or formal ones. In informal mentoring relationships, youth gravitate toward adults such as relatives, teachers or coaches for advice or guidance. In formal mentoring relationships, a specific person is designated to be a role model.

The TeamMates Mentoring Program connects mentors and mentees in formal mentoring relationships in an effort to help youth reach their full potential. Mentors can help students build personal assets, such as skills, experiences or opportunities that will enable them to become caring, confident, self-sufficient adults.

About the TeamMates Mentoring Program

Based upon their knowledge of how invaluable an adult's support and encouragement of school-aged youth can be, Tom and Nancy Osborne founded the TeamMates Mentoring Program in 1991. To help students achieve the goal of graduating from high school and going on for post-secondary education, youth meet once a week with a caring adult who serves as a mentor. Serving as volunteers from the community, mentors commit themselves to making a difference in the life of a young person. Mentors help youth develop a sense of hope, purpose and vision.

Mission

To positively impact the world by inspiring youth to reach their full potential through mentoring.

Core Values

- **Commitment to youth** – We are committed to serving youth with compassion and respect.
- **Safety** – The safety and protection of the mentee and mentor is a top priority.
- **Integrity and Trust** – We are committed to integrity and trust in all relationships.
- **Inclusion** – We are committed to the inclusion of mentees and mentors from diverse backgrounds.

Vision

To become the gold standard of school-based mentoring programs.

Our Philosophy

- We believe everyone needs a positive role model to provide guidance and wisdom.
- Our goal is to help all mentees reach their full potential and encourage them to graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary education.
- The parents/guardians are mentees' primary support; a mentor's role is to provide additional support and encouragement.
- We believe mentors can influence youth in a positive way by helping them to build assets (skills, experiences, relationships, and behaviors that help youth to develop into successful, contributing adults) and by providing ongoing support and opportunities for growth.

TeamMates Youth

- A youth in the TeamMates Mentoring Program is called a "mentee."
- Youth in the TeamMates Mentoring Program have expressed a desire to have an additional caring adult in their life.

How TeamMates Works

- Mentors are thoroughly screened, trained and supported to ensure the best possible relationship with youth.
- Mentors meet their mentees one time per week at the school during school hours.
- Mentors and mentees play games, do crafts, learn new things, and talk together. The mentoring relationship is a developmental relationship.
- School buildings have a designated TeamMates School Facilitator to provide direct support and guidance for the mentors and mentees.

To meet screening requirements, all mentors must:

- Complete the TeamMates online application (incl. meeting eligibility requirements)
- Be at least 18 years old
- Have earned a high school diploma, GED, or equivalent life experience
- Provide information that enables a criminal background check
- Provide three character references

The Rewards

- Mentors often report that they feel they have received much more from the mentoring relationship than they have given.
- TeamMates collects data on TeamMates' outcomes. Research on strengths-based matches shows a positive influence on student engagement with school. For many TeamMates youth, academic performance improves, school attendance improves, and disciplinary referrals are reduced.

“My mentor has always been there for me ever since seventh grade. She always listens to what I have to say, and she is a very positive influence on me and my life. My mentor has had a very positive influence on my grades and attendance, and she definitely inspired me to make positive choices...and a positive influence on somebody is the best gift you can give someone.”

TeamMates Mentee, Grade 12

Steps to Becoming a TeamMates Mentor

Application and Agreement

Prospective mentors complete an application and mentor agreement.

Background Check

Perspective mentors complete a confidential criminal history background check. This must be completed before being matched with a student.

Character Reference Process

Prospective mentors provide a minimum of three character references. References must reply before an applicant can be approved to mentor.

Required Training

In order for individuals to be approved to become a mentor, they must complete a 2.5 to 3-hour, training session to review TeamMates policies and prepare for experiences they may encounter while volunteering in the schools.

Completion of the Preference Form

Approved volunteers respond to questions about their interests, favorite subjects, and the distance they are willing to travel to mentor. They may also note special qualifications (ex. having grown up in foster care). This information helps school staff match adult and student TeamMates.

Interview with School Facilitator

The TeamMates facilitator at the school meets with the mentor in order to become acquainted and help the facilitator make a good fit for the match.

Student Match

The TeamMates facilitator will introduce the mentor to the student. If they agree to form a partnership, they will review and sign the Mentee/Mentor Agreement.

School Orientation

The mentor receives a brief orientation of the school. This includes instructions about where to sign in and other school protocols. (See page 10 for a copy of the form.)

Weekly Meetings

Mentors schedule their weekly meetings in concert with the school facilitator and in support of their promise to see their TeamMate every week. Core class periods are not used for mentoring. Mentors should contact their school facilitator if unable to meet at their regularly-scheduled meeting time.

Annual Recognition

The adult and youth TeamMates will be invited to an annual recognition event or receive annual recognition.

Who Will I Mentor?

As with all relationships, there is no single description that would cover the personalities, developmental stages, or identities of all youth. Each young person is unique and has individual gifts to bring to the mentoring relationship. Due to confidentiality, details of your mentee's school and personal and home situation will be limited; this allows both of you to begin the relationship with a clean slate, enabling you to become acquainted without preconceived ideas about one another. The TeamMates facilitator at each school and the Lincoln TeamMates staff provide support and guidance to mentoring matches, so please do not hesitate to ask for help. Contact information can be found on page 66.

In general, TeamMates mentees:

- Have been selected to be in the TeamMates program because they would benefit from the attention of an additional, caring adult in their lives.
- Have been nominated by school staff, parents/guardians or other concerned individuals. In some cases, youth request a mentor on their own.
- Are in grades 3-12 and attend a public or parochial school that supports the TeamMates program.
- Have parent/guardian permission and support to participate in TeamMates.
- Have been trained in their role as a mentee.
- Desire to work with an adult to develop a positive relationship and sign a mentee agreement.
- May come from a religious, socio-economic or cultural background different from your own.

As a mentor, you are encouraged to educate yourself about differences you may discover between you and your mentee. By nurturing ties to your mentee's culture and/or lived experience, you will be better able to strengthen their self-esteem and affirm their identity.

Mentoring and Commitment

Every successful mentoring relationship rests upon the foundation of trust. Your commitment to the relationship and persistence in meeting with your mentee regularly form an indispensable part of developing that trust. We ask for your commitment to:

- Mentor once a week
- Mentor long-term (matches are paired for an average 2.8 years)
- Keep the best interest of the youth at the forefront of the relationship
- Be consistent in your meetings
- Be a good role model
- Ask for help if needed
- Be patient
- Be a safe adult
- Respect the rights of your mentee
- Respect the culture and lived experience of your mentee
- Keep information about your mentee, mentee's family, and the school confidential

Confidentiality is an important part of building trust in a mentoring relationship, and it is often one of the most delicate issues for mentors. **The mentor should let their mentee know that what they share will remain confidential unless it causes harm to the mentee or others.**

As a mentor, you will likely learn much about the private matters of your mentee and their family. If your mentee has entrusted you with private information, please respect the mentee's privacy and that of your mentee's family. In talking about your mentee with others, without being diligent in protecting your mentee's privacy, you may inadvertently share private information about your mentee: the mentee's family, grades or academic issues, financial situation, health or other matters. Protecting your mentee's confidentiality reflects your respect for the young person whose trust in you has led to disclosure of any personal information that has been shared with you.

If you need to talk about your mentee or about other concerns related to mentoring, call or make arrangements to see your TeamMates school facilitator or a school counselor.

If your mentee reports a situation of risk (harm to self, harm to others, or harm by others) contact your TeamMates school facilitator and make a report to Health and Human Services.

Please see pages 34-38 for additional information about child abuse. The Nebraska hotline number for reporting is 1-800-652-1999.



Facilitator Use Only: Matching Form 3 of 3
Student first, last name, ID on pg.1
Pg. 1, 2 signed by student, mentor, facilitator
Pg. 1, 2 scanned to DocuShare Drop Box
Keep this completed form at your discretion.

MENTEE/MENTOR AGREEMENT (pg. 1 of 2)

This agreement is to be discussed and signed by all parties in the presence of the mentee, the mentor and the TeamMates Facilitator. This form does not replace the Mentor Agreement Form.

MENTEE

I, _____, agree to work with my mentor and the people at my school to be as successful as I can be.
(Print Mentee first & last name)

I agree to:

- commit to a minimum of three years with the goal of staying with my mentor through high school graduation;
follow my school's rules (or Code of Conduct) at school and TeamMates events;
cooperate with TeamMates policies and procedures;
meet with my mentor weekly;
ask my parent or guardian, my mentor, or my school if I need help;
set goals the best I can;
get to school and be on time each day;
work to improve myself;
treat others and myself with respect.

_____, _____, _____, _____
Mentee Signature (first & last name) Student ID Grade Date

MENTOR

I, _____, agree to assist my student any way I can.
(Print Mentor first & last name)

I agree to:

- commit to a minimum of three years with the goal of staying with my mentee through high school graduation;
follow my school's rules (or Code of Conduct) at school and TeamMates events;
cooperate with TeamMates policies and procedures;
meet with my mentee weekly;
participate in one learning opportunity per year;
provide encouragement and support;
encourage my mentee to graduate from high school.

_____, _____
Mentor Signature Date

_____, _____, _____
Facilitator Signature School Date



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2021-22 Mentor School Orientation Information	
CONTACT INFO	<p>Name of School: _____ Address: _____</p> <p>Facilitator: _____ Phone: _____</p> <p>Email: _____ Best time to contact: _____</p> <p>Check in: Always wear your photo ID badge. Check in and out with the security personnel (SEM) at the door.</p> <p>To verify your mentee is at school before coming AND if you cannot visit your mentee, contact:</p> <p>Name(s): _____ at: _____</p> <p>Place(s) to meet with mentee: _____</p> <p>Mentee's Name: _____ Grade: _____</p>
SCHOOL INFO	<p>School Calendar: <input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed <input type="checkbox"/> Emailed Bell Schedule/Lunch Schedule: <input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed <input type="checkbox"/> Emailed</p> <p>School Map: <input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed <input type="checkbox"/> Emailed</p> <p>Enter through door # _____ on the _____ side of the building</p> <p>Parking is available: _____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your attire should reflect that of an appropriate role model (no short shorts, no tank tops, etc.) Please turn off your cell phone when in the building. <u>FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS OF THE NEAREST STAFF MEMBER</u> if you are in the building during an emergency situation.
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Games/crafts are available (location/s): _____ Other activities available (location/s): _____ It is acceptable to bring games, craft materials or other items to be used during the mentoring time. <p>Note: Students should not spend mentoring time on independent video games. Positive, interactive, and educational use of technology is acceptable during mentoring time.</p>
POLICY & SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may not text, email or phone your mentee. This includes high school mentees. You may not be "friends" with or follow your mentee on any social media. <u>Do not</u> give gifts of any size or give money to your mentee. Do not bring meals for your mentee. You may not bring snacks/treats/drinks for yourself or your mentee. Important: If you must end your match for any reason, please contact the facilitator as soon as possible. It is in the best interest of your mentee to plan a final meeting to reflect and celebrate your time spent together. If your schedule changes, please contact the facilitator to reschedule your meeting time. Other Notes: _____ <p style="text-align: center;">Thank you for your willingness to mentor and make a positive difference in your mentee's life!</p>

Building A Relationship

Developmental vs. Prescriptive Mentoring

A TeamMates mentor is essentially a safe, adult friend who provides consistent support for the young person. The journey of each mentoring relationship is unique, and how quickly a young person develops trust in the relationship depends upon many factors. If you keep your promise to meet consistently and encourage your mentee to use their strengths, the relationship can become an important aid in the young person's development. Mentoring researcher, Jean Rhodes, describes the impact of a mentor in three ways:

- Enhances social skills and emotional well-being of mentee
- Improves cognitive skills of mentee through dialogue and listening
- Serves as a role model and advocate

All people bring to new relationships the experiences they have had in past relationships. Many adults and young people feel uncertain or cautious about new people in their lives. Give your mentee time to become acquainted with you and remember that your consistency in meeting enables your mentee to develop trust in you and your commitment to the relationship. The extent of the impact of mentoring depends upon the quality of the relationship and the communication that develops between mentor and mentee and serves as the starting point from which other outcomes emerge.

As a TeamMates mentor, you will be engaged primarily in developmental mentoring.

Developmental mentoring is focused on the bond between mentor and youth. Activities are always grounded in creating a friendship. Thus, time spent talking and connecting is just as beneficial as time spent finishing homework. The focus of the relationship is the total development of the young person, and specific issues are just part of the whole. Asset-building activities or strengths-focused activities are a part of developmental mentoring.

Prescriptive mentoring is focused on problem-solving. The mentor is assigned to address a specific problem for the mentee and achieve certain goals.

Research clearly shows youth mentoring to be most effective when structured around a developmental relationship. Research also highlights the importance of mentors as positive adult role models.

Adapted from the U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Resource Center

Developmental Mentors:	Prescriptive Mentors:
<p>Ask the mentee what they would like to do during the match meeting.</p> <p><i>Listen</i> more than talk.</p> <p>Play games, just hang out, or help with homework, depending on what the mentee asks for that day.</p> <p>Allow the mentee to naturally bring up issues and concerns.</p> <p>Help to build the mentee’s own confidence to be successful.</p>	<p><i>Tell</i> the mentee what they need to do during the match meeting.</p> <p><i>Give advice</i> more than listen.</p> <p>Focus on tasks to meet specific goals.</p> <p>Push the mentee to talk about issues or concerns.</p> <p>Try to solve a specific problem.</p>

Developmental Mentoring Scenario

Jane knows that if she fails her next math test, she’ll flunk math. And if she does, she’s determined to drop out of school.

Prescriptive approach: *Jane’s academic success mentor works with her to review for the test, has contacted the school tutoring program for additional help, and has arranged with the math teacher to get copies of supplemental homework assignments.*

Developmental approach: *Jane’s TeamMates mentor helps Jane build goals for the future that she’s excited about and that show her the value of what she’s learning in school. She helps Jane develop study skills and self-discipline that will help her with all her schoolwork, not just math.*

Prescriptive mentoring certainly has its place—but developmental mentoring will help Jane develop the self-confidence and self-reliance she’ll need over the long haul. It will also help form the strong bond that makes TeamMates mentoring work.

Building Trust

We cannot emphasize enough that trust forms the foundation of the mentoring relationship. Without trust, mentors and mentees cannot develop a bond and the sense of safety that fosters a mentee's growth. Building trust takes time. We encourage you to be patient, understanding that the amount of time it takes for your mentee to feel comfortable and to trust in you often reflects many factors outside of the relationship between the two of you.

You can help your mentee to trust you in the following ways:

- **Be fully present with your mentee.** Do your best to avoid being distracted by thoughts of work, home, or your own family. Turn off cell phones and other electronic devices. Be “in the moment” and enjoy the mentoring experience.
- **See your mentee as a person.** Your mentee is not a project, and you are not there to “straighten him or her out.” This means getting to know the mentee first and then responding according to who they are. Encourage your mentee's unique gifts.
- **Be consistent.** Consistency builds trust. Always show up for scheduled meetings; keep your promises and notify your mentee (and facilitator) if plans must change.
- **Be yourself.** You don't need to try to come off as the “perfect adult” in the mentee's life. Youth see through adults who posture, so we hope you can be your authentic self.
- **Set a good example.** Serve as an example of a trustworthy person. For instance, don't divulge things that others told you in confidence. Don't “fudge” the rules of the program. Your mentee notices everything you do.
- **Involve the mentee.** Both of you should decide how you will spend your time. Pay attention to the youth's need for fun; it will keep the youth engaged.
- **Listen.** Always listen to the mentee, and don't put down or minimize their feelings. Respect your mentee's point of view. You're hearing about the world they live in. Soak it up.
- **Be empathetic.** Use as much empathy as possible, saying things like, “That must be difficult,” or “I know that's tough; I have to obey similar rules at work.”

Handout adapted, from L. Villarreal, *Save Our Youth Training Manual*, Denver, CO: Save Our Youth 2005 and Designing and Customizing Mentor Training by Elsy Arevalo 2004

What Young People Need from Caring Adults: Don't Quit on Me

In 2015, *The Center for Promise* conducted research with over 3,000 young people about the value of adults as it affects the youth's ability to negotiate significant difficulties. Adults who work with young people can learn from the research findings about factors that may help in building relationships and developing trust with their mentees. They are summarized here.

Building Connectedness and Trust in Relationships

Studies conducted prior to the study by the *Center for Promise* established four benchmarks of another person's sincere interest in a young person. To enhance a youth's ability to trust an adult, young people are looking for the adult to:

1. Understand the young person's needs, strengths and goals;
2. Recognize and be responsive to what is happening in the youth's life;
3. Demonstrate care for the young person and be willing and able to provide support when the young person encounters challenges; and
4. Communicate warmth and connectedness, such that the youth can sense this even when the adult is not present.

Young people who drop out of school are much more likely to report that they encountered multiple difficulties in their lives. Yet, in spite of a yearning for connection, they did not ask anyone for help. Risk factors that increased the likelihood of leaving school included:

1. The youth's need to negotiate toxic environments (home, school, neighborhoods, having to be caregivers in their families or needing to earn money, homelessness, changing schools several times);
2. Encountering others' low expectations of them;
3. Being expelled from school;
4. Becoming a parent;
5. Having peers who don't graduate from school;
6. Having mental health issues;
7. Using drugs;
8. Being truant from school frequently;
9. Being unprepared for academic work; and
10. Moving frequently.

The greater the number of risk factors in a young person's life, the more likely they are to drop out of school. The *Center for Promise* noted that while young people are resilient, resiliency alone is not enough; they need the support of adults and trusted peers to deal with the challenges presented by these risk factors.

The more young people benefit from emotional and instrumental support, the more likely they are to persist in school and graduate. Such supports “not only buffer the effects of adversity, they also allow young people to direct their strengths toward academic success” (*Center*, p. 15). In their interviews and questionnaires, this is how young people described what they wanted from a caring adult that would enable them to establish trust:

1. Invest time
2. Be there no matter what
3. Empathize
4. Offer help without judgement
5. Be honest
6. Be faithful and consistent (*Center*, p. 17)

The authors of the study noted that one stable, anchoring relationship can serve as a gateway to the wider web of support that young people need. An anchoring relationship is described as “a person who is not a family member and not a paid youth worker who provides deep, unconditional support” (*Center*, p. 25).

“Encountering a caring adult who provides a deep level of trust, stability and responsiveness—‘whatever it takes’—begins to rebuild the stability that is missing in many young people’s lives” (*Center*, p. 37).

Center for Promise (2015). Don’t quit on me: What young people who left school say about the power of relationships. Washington, DC: America’s Promise Alliance

TeamMates Tip: Refer to the Middle Childhood and Adolescent Development Chart on page 65. It may be useful in understanding the development of your mentee in the areas of self-concept, relationship to parents and other adults and peer relationships.

The Developmental Relationships Framework

Young people are more likely to grow up successfully when they experience developmental relationships with important people in their lives. Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. Search Institute has identified five elements—expressed in 20 specific actions—that make relationships powerful in young people’s lives.

	Elements	Actions	Definitions
	<p>Express Care Show me that I matter to you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be dependable.....Be someone I can trust. • Listen.....Really pay attention when we are together. • Believe in me.....Make me feel known and valued. • Be warm.....Show me you enjoy being with me. • Encourage.....Praise me for my efforts and achievements. 	
	<p>Challenge Growth Push me to keep getting better.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect my best.....Expect me to live up to my potential. • Stretch.....Push me to go further. • Hold me accountable.....Insist I take responsibility for my actions. • Reflect on failures.....Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks. 	
	<p>Provide Support Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate.....Guide me through hard situations and systems. • Empower.....Build my confidence to take charge of my life. • Advocate.....Stand up for me when I need it. • Set boundaries.....Put limits in place that keep me on track. 	
	<p>Share Power Treat me with respect and give me a say.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect me.....Take me seriously and treat me fairly. • Include me.....Involve me in decisions that affect me. • Collaborate.....Work with me to solve problems and reach goals. • Let me lead.....Create opportunities for me to take action and lead. 	
	<p>Expand Possibilities Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire.....Inspire me to see possibilities for my future. • Broaden horizons.....Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places. • Connect.....Introduce me to people who can help me grow. 	

NOTE: Relationships are, by definition, bidirectional, with each person giving and receiving. So each person in a strong relationship both engages in and experiences each of these actions. However, for the purpose of clarity, this framework is expressed from the perspective of one young person.

Stages of a Relationship

Each mentor/mentee relationship grows at a different pace, but they all start out in the same way: two people agree to try to become friends. How long that takes depends on many variables. Still, there is a pattern to the journey of building a relationship. If you know what the pattern will be, you can be prepared to get through possible difficult periods successfully.

Stage 1: The Beginning or Honeymoon Stage

- **Mentors** have energy and excitement for the relationship but need to set boundaries.
- **Mentees** are on their best behavior and are generally likable but cautious about trusting.

Relationship: Both mentors and mentees are learning their roles. There may be anxiety and uncertainty on both sides. Take some time to find mutual interests and common ground. Purposely focus on building trust, getting to know one another, and setting ground rules for your relationship. Be dependable, responsive, and consistent.

Stage 2: Relationship Growth Stage

- **Mentors** begin to feel the commitment as the newness wears off, and it may become tempting to miss a visit.
- **Mentees** let their guard down as they build trust with their mentors. The mentee may test the mentor for consistency.

Relationship: Building trust, setting limits, and experiencing some confusion about roles are common in this stage. This is an important time to be consistent, even when it may seem as if the relationship is struggling. Your mentee will value your consistency and unconditional support.

Stage 3: Maturity Stage

- **Mentors** feel comfortable with their mentees, can identify the mentees' strengths, and provide guidance that fits their personalities.
- **Mentees** may feel more comfortable sharing the challenges they are facing and begin relying on their mentors as a trusted resource and advocate.

Relationship: Trust has been developed, and the relationship moves to a level of friendship. Roles are now clearly defined, and the relationship is able to be flexible without either person feeling guilty. Your mentee may be ready for more complex life skills, like problem solving, community involvement, or college preparation.

NOTE: *The relationship can cycle through the "growth" and "maturity" phases a number of times. The first time is the toughest, since the bond of trust is weaker than it will become.*

Stage 4: Ending Stage

Mentoring matches end for a number of reasons. Some of them are very positive, like high school graduation; others are more difficult. Whether initiated by the mentor or mentee, the way a relationship ends can have a big impact on a young person. When mentors take an active role in making “goodbye” a positive experience, they reinforce the benefits of mentoring for their mentees and help their mentees to be open to mentoring in the future.

Managing a Healthy Closure

A gradual closure - when possible, this is best!

- If you are initiating the closure, let your school facilitator and mentee know in advance, if possible. **Be clear about the timeframe and identify a final meeting date.**
- Giving your mentee a reason for closure helps them to know it’s not personal, and not their fault.
- Take several meetings to share feelings about the match ending. Be aware that feelings can change. For example, your mentee may seem aloof at first, then as the final meeting gets closer, they may feel sad or disappointed.

The final meeting - make it positive!

- Express your feelings about the match closure. Encourage your mentee to do the same. Identify natural emotions like grief, denial, sadness, or mixed feelings. Let your mentee know these are normal and be receptive to their feelings.
- Be sure your mentee understands the reason for the closure (if you are initiating it) so they understand it’s not personal and they are not at fault.
- Celebrate achievements and milestones reached.
- Point out the strengths of the relationship and particularly the strengths of your mentee.

Reflect on your mentoring experience

Take time to reflect on your mentoring journey together. Below are some suggestions of questions you can reflect on together:

- What has having a mentor/mentee taught you about yourself?
- What are three things you are proudest of?
- What are some of your favorite memories with me?

Staying in touch

Once your match closes, the liability coverage of your match also ends. Your mentee may want to stay in touch with you, however, ***PLEASE DO NOT PROMISE ANYTHING THAT YOU DO NOT INTEND TO DO.***

If you and your mentee mutually wish to stay in touch, it is possible to exchange contact information at your last meeting. If you would like to exchange information, please let your school facilitator or Match Support Specialist know, as parent permission must be obtained first.

Adapted from MENTOR/The National Mentoring Partnership, 2007 and The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania, 2007

A Mentor's Roles

Be an advocate. Mentors are advocates who help their mentees be successful in school. Mentors can connect youth to academic resources and community support.

Remember you are a support. You should not see your role in the relationship as a savior. Young people are capable of solving problems and have gifts and talents to offer the world.

Be a friend and have fun. Having fun and getting to know the mentee is the primary goal of any mentoring relationship. Share some of your hobbies and interests with your mentee.

Allow the mentee to have a voice and choice in deciding on activities. Ask your mentee what they would like to do during your match meetings. Do things together that support your common interests.

Be positive. Offer encouragement and assistance. When times are tough for your mentee, be positive about their future. Help your mentee to develop a growth mindset (see page 53) and to remember that success often depends upon persistence when things are difficult. Celebrate academic and life successes.

Let the mentee control the direction of conversations. Don't push your mentee to tell you everything. Allow your mentee some time to get to know you, build trust, and share confidences when they are ready to do so.

Listen. Sometimes your mentee will need to vent about school, home, or friends. By listening to your mentee, you will learn a lot about them. You may not share your mentee's perspective, but can strive to understand their point of view.

Respect the trust your mentee places in you. Don't judge your mentee or provide unwanted advice when they tell you about personal matters. Your mentee will already be getting a lot of advice from authority figures; your job is to be a consistent, non-judgmental friend.

Remember that the relationship is with the mentee. The focus of the match is on your mentee's needs, not those of the family or parent.

Remember that you are responsible for building the relationship. Take the initiative to maintain meetings with your mentee. Keep in mind that sometimes mentees are shy about connecting with adults.

Adapted from: *Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors*, by Linda Jucovy (Portland, OR: NWREL, National Mentoring Center, 2001)

The Role of a Mentor

A Mentor Is...	A Mentor Is Not...

Exploring Diversity

Diversity within mentoring includes any significant, personal or cultural difference between the mentor and mentee. Diversity includes all the things that help make each person unique, such as:

- Country of origin
- Socio-economic background
- Level of education
- Level of acculturation in the US
- Religion
- Generation
- Age
- Skin tone
- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender identity and gender roles
- Marital status
- Sexual orientation
- Disability

You and your mentee will expand each other's worlds. Encourage your mentee to go outside their immediate experience and model curiosity and openness about your mentee's unique identity.

As a mentor, please remember to consider the following:

- **You will encounter differences.** Mentees differ from their mentors in age, and may have different racial or ethnic background and/or socioeconomic status.
- **Diversity is a two-way street.** You and your mentee will encounter many learning opportunities. For example, your mentee may know of no one else who has a career like yours. You may find that your mentee has talents you don't have.
- **Youth culture has unique rules.** Young people often experiment with dress and behavior as they explore their identity. How we associate with our peer group and express ourselves are examples of diversity. When you were a teen, what did adults think about your clothing, hairstyle, or music?
- **Communication styles vary from culture to culture.** This may include nonverbal communication, eye contact, use of language, and conflict resolution.
- **Embrace diversity.** The two of you can be instrumental in helping one another gain interpersonal and cultural competence, which are important developmental assets. Explore and celebrate your differences as much as your commonalities. These dialogues can be a natural and genuine opportunity to build trust and understanding.
- **Be understanding and nonjudgmental.** Avoid assumptions or judgments, and your relationship will develop. Curiosity, combined with a sincere desire to understand, goes a long way toward defusing judgment based upon our own cultural frames of reference and implicit biases.
- **Meet the experience of poverty with compassion.** Many TeamMates families experience economic hardship. They face survival decisions you may never have navigated. Look for ways to highlight your mentee's resilience, and avoid judging the choices of your mentee's family if their choices don't align with ones you would make.

The Myths and Facts about Poverty

Many factors contribute to poverty and are little understood by those who have not experienced the realities of life at this economic level. Mark Rank and Thomas Hirschl have extensively researched poverty, social inequality and class differentiation and address many of the myths about poverty. Their website, *Confronting Poverty*, presents a more accurate assessment of the reality of poverty.

Myth #1: Poverty is limited to few individuals in communities.

- **Fact:** Nearly 60% of people in the U.S. between 20 and 75 years old will fall below the poverty line for at least one year.
- **Fact:** In Lincoln, 1 out of 5 children experiences the obstacles of poverty.

Myth #2: Poverty is an urban issue.

- **Fact:** Poverty is dispersed throughout urban, suburban and rural areas.
- **Fact:** Although persons of color are at a higher risk of poverty per capita, two-thirds of those living in poverty are white.

Myth #3: People's lack of motivation or personal responsibility causes poverty.

- **Fact:** Attitudes and values of those in poverty mirror those in mainstream America.
- **Fact:** The majority of those experiencing poverty have worked extensively in the past.

Rank, M.R., & Hirschl, T.A. (2017) *Confronting poverty*. <https://confrontingpoverty.org/>

What Can Mentors Do?

Mentors may feel overwhelmed at first working with young people whose families have low-to-poverty level incomes. Often, they find themselves wanting to give resources (gifts, money, food, etc.) to their mentees. While doing so may help to reduce mentors' anxieties, it is both contrary to TeamMates policies and does not help mentees in the long term.

Experts believe that helping students develop a sense of purpose supports their ability to adopt the behaviors and choices that decrease the likelihood of experiencing poverty as adults. A close relationship with a mentor helps the student to recognize and build upon his or her strengths and experience improvements emotionally, behaviorally, socially, and academically. Those improvements, in both resisting negative influences and making positive choices, can help a mentee to graduate from high school and go on for further education or training—essential keys to avoiding poverty.

Machell, K. A., Disabato, D.J., & Kashdan, T. B. (2015). *Buffering the negative impact of poverty on youth: The power of purpose in life*. Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht. DOI: 10.1007/s11205-015-0917-6. Retrieved from: <http://toddkashdan.com/articles/purpose%20poverty%202015.pdf>

DuBois, D. L., Portillo, N., Rhodes, J. E., Silverthorn, N., & Valentine, J. C. (2011). How effective are mentoring programs for youth? A systematic assessment of the evidence. *Sage* (12) 2. 57-91. DOI: 10.1177/1529100611414806

Why Is Diversity Training Relevant?

“THE SINGLE MOST important aspect of promoting understanding across differences is understanding oneself—one’s own values, beliefs, perspectives, choices and early messages about people who are different. Often, we unconsciously judge others according to our internal assessments of what we did or would do in similar circumstances. We extrapolate how we would feel and what our priorities and values would be. When we become conscious of how our own experiences inform our judgments, we can critically test our assumptions about others.”

-Barbara Webster

Scenario: *A 14-year-old mentee is two hours late to her meeting with her mentor. The mentor asks why the mentee is late and the mentee says her mother’s car broke down. The mentor, thinking of the mentee’s future, tells her that she should have called. To keep a job, to succeed in college, and out of just plain politeness, calling is the right thing to do—that her success in life depends on her ability to handle these situations appropriately when they occur. The mentee, feeling like she has failed again, apologizes and says nothing more.*

Questions to consider:

1. What assumptions did the mentor make about the mentee, prior to her remarks about calling?
2. Rather than a lecture on the importance of calling, what questions might the mentor have asked the mentee about the situation?
3. Can you think of other situations where mentors and mentees might have gaps in their communication because of differences in lived experience?

Had the mentor explored the situation further she would have discovered that the mentee had been looking forward to their meeting and had actually left home quite early. After the car broke down, the mentee walked a mile to a gas station to make a call while her mom waited in the car. When she got to the phone, she used her only change to make one phone call. She called her brother, who is good with cars, because the family has no roadside assistance insurance and couldn’t afford a tow. She then walked the mile back to the car to wait there with her mother for her brother. It was a long wait, because the brother didn’t have the kind of job where he could leave early. Not wanting to miss the meeting altogether, she asked her brother to drive her over and drop her off. (Barbara Webster, Blisters and Bright Stars, EMT Group).

Consider this: Diversity training may have helped the mentor realize it’s unfair to assume the mentee or her family had a cell phone that would have allowed her to call the school. Differences in communication styles created a disconnect between the mentor and mentee that prevented them from discussing the situation effectively. The mentor’s background likely influenced her emphasis on etiquette (and her assumption that the mentee didn’t know/care about the rules of etiquette). Ideally, a mentor is supportive, nonjudgmental and empathetic to challenges faced by the mentee and their family.

TeamMates Mentoring of Lincoln embraces Lincoln Public Schools’ welcoming all children and youth, echoing Superintendent Steve Joel when he states, “all means all.” If in the course of mentoring you have questions regarding race, ethnic background, culture, religion, or LGBTQ+ identity of your mentee, please call TeamMates of Lincoln for resources and guidance: 402-436-1990.

Signs of Success

TeamMates mentors frequently ask, “Am I making a difference?” The impact of mentoring may not be obvious, but there are signs that mentors may observe as a result their influence.

Of course, each relationship is different. Your mentee may not exhibit signs of success as quickly as you are looking for them. That doesn’t mean you are not doing a good job. Be patient and give your relationship with your TeamMate time.

Research on strengths-focused matches shows a high percentage of youth who looked forward to seeing their mentors each week and a positive correlation was discovered between students looking forward to seeing their mentors and their overall levels of hope, engagement and well-being.

Mentors may not readily see changes. Change is not always apparent; but trust that good things are happening. You may not witness it, but research reminds us that positive momentum is occurring whether you see it or not. You are a change agent.

Possible Signs of Success:

- Improved attendance
- Improved eye contact (if culturally comfortable)
- Raising a hand more often in class
- Increased communication
- Smiling (or other indication of elevated mood)
- Paying more attention in class
- Improved peer interaction
- Fewer discipline referrals/detentions
- Improved appearance (or positive self-talk)
- Opening up to the mentor
- Increased consideration of others
- Improved academic performance
- Positive talk about school
- Improved outlook
- Decreased hostility

Boundaries

Boundaries

Boundaries are particularly important in mentoring relationships. Boundaries help protect both the youth and the mentors in the program. You can also explain to your mentee how boundary setting is a valuable life practice for everyone.

Common areas where TeamMates boundaries are needed include:

- Safe environment/location and physical touch
- Social media
- Time
- Money
- Self-disclosure
- Working with parents/families

Safe Environment

***Location scenario:** Enriqu  and Jos  have been meeting in the conference room at the middle school for two years on a regular basis. They have discovered the space is no longer available and have decided to meet in a windowless room that used to be a storage closet, but has been converted for mentor meetings. Because of the noisy hallways, Enriqu  has been closing the door for more privacy. Jos  seems distracted during meetings and keeps eyeing the door. Enriqu  feels something is wrong but can't put his finger on it.*

Choosing an appropriate location for mentor meetings can present challenges in crowded schools, but safety and emotional comfort for the mentored youth are a priority. A mentor should always:

- Keep doors and window blinds open so the mentoring meeting can be observed by those passing by
- Choose public spaces in the school, such as the media center, forum area, gymnasium or hallways, instead of out of the way closed-off spaces
- Stay on school grounds and notify the school staff if leaving the building, even to walk outdoors
- Contact the school facilitator if you are having difficulty finding appropriate space to meet at the school

REMEMBER:

- **TeamMates is a school-based mentoring program**
- **Matches meet at the school**
- **Matches communicate through the school**

Physical touch scenario: Ruth delights in meeting with her fourth-grade mentee, Misty, each week. Ruth opens her arms for a hug as a way of greeting—just like she would for her grandkids. Ruth is offended because Misty seems to hesitate before hugging her.

- Do not assume that your mentee’s comfort with physical touch mirrors your own; always take your cue from your mentee. What you see as simple friendly affection between the mentee and yourself may be viewed as something entirely different by someone else.

Social Media Boundaries

Pete and his mentee, Saul, have been matched for three years and, now that Saul is in high school, he has begun sending Pete requests to ‘friend’ him on Facebook. Pete is concerned about some of the choices Saul makes in his personal life and wonders if Facebook would be a good way to keep track of what his mentee is doing.

Part of developing a safe environment boundary is to maintain communication at and through the school. Do NOT become involved in social networking sites with your mentee, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, SnapChat, or instant messaging. Confidentiality could be compromised if you are connected via social networking with your mentee.

Do NOT share photos or any identifying or personal information about your mentee.

A mentor who engages his or her mentee in face-to-face conversations or activities provides the mentee with valuable opportunities to develop and refine interpersonal and communication skills. Mentors’ experiences and diverse backgrounds provide mentees with different perspectives of the world. As they interact with their mentors, they will be exposed to ideas and concepts that can broaden their understanding of their own lives and those of others.

Communication boundaries have been devised to keep both adults and youth in the program safe; contact outside the school is NOT permitted.

Time Boundaries

After meeting for six months, Julia finds out that her mentee is failing all but one class. It is the beginning of the second semester at school, and Julia wants to do everything she can to help. She begins to meet with her mentee twice a week for longer periods of time. She shares her contact information too and before long, her mentee calls her at work, home, and on her cell phone. Julia is glad her mentee is relying on her so much, but she feels tired and overwhelmed.

- Consistency and frequency of meetings are important elements of a successful mentoring relationship. Rather than supporting a mentee’s ability to build upon strengths and develop abilities that support self-sufficiency, spending too much time together can create dependency and may actually disempower youth.

- Seek help from staff and community resources often and be an advocate to help youth solve their own problems.
- A youth who clings to the relationship may be worried about being abandoned. Setting regular and consistent meetings will help assure them that, over time, the mentor will be there.
- If a mentor does not set boundaries with regard to personal time, they can unknowingly create conditions that will lead to burnout and a premature ending of the mentoring relationship.
- Honor the TeamMates model: one time a week and no exchange of contact information.

Money Boundaries

Suzanne and Aliea have been meeting for more than three months and have a relaxed and positive relationship. During their weekly meeting, Aliea seems quiet and distracted. When her mentor asks her how things are going, Aliea shares that her mother recently lost her job, and they haven't had groceries since the beginning of the week. She complains about being hungry and worried about how the family will eat. Suzanne wonders how to help the family with food.

Boundary setting, in the abstract, seems simple and easy to do. However, in the complexity of day-to-day interactions, setting boundaries around money issues is not easy. Should a mentor help in a financial crisis? Should a mentor provide for a mentee's basic needs? When should a mentor give gifts?

Here are some guidelines:

- **A mentor's role is not that of provider.** Creating financial dependency will ultimately compromise the relationship. If a young person is going through financial difficulties, mentors can help by connecting their mentee to the appropriate school resources.
- **Gifts should not be given to mentees.** Gift giving takes attention away from the relationship. Buying gifts can even be used to compensate for the lack of relationship. Mentors need to send the strong message that time spent together is the gift. The gift of time and friendship will prove more valuable and enduring than any material thing they can give their mentees. Gifts do not include items for immediate consumption such as food and beverage, and supplies needed for mentoring activities. If you wish to bring an occasional treat for your mentee (for example, to acknowledge your mentee's birthday), please check with the school facilitator about any school guidelines.
- **Meals may not be provided to mentees.** If you meet over lunch and wish to eat with your mentee, please remember that, *only parents may bring a meal to school* for their children. The schools welcome mentors as diners: lunch in elementary and middle schools is \$3.95 and \$4.25 in high schools (cash or check).

In fact, if you don't want to worry about bringing money to school each week, schools are happy to set up an account for mentors of high school students.

- **Be an advocate.** If you believe your mentee has an unmet need, contact your school facilitator to help your mentee to connect to school resources.

Self-Disclosure Boundaries

Josh, a 45-year-old mentor, was matched three months ago with a 14-year-old boy. Josh is currently divorcing his wife and is in the middle of court custody proceedings. Needless to say, this is a stressful time for him. His mentee, Joel, is a bright and articulate boy whose parents are also divorcing. As soon as they met, they found they had a lot in common to talk about. Josh is the only person who seems to understand what Joel is going through. In turn, Joel has begun to express to program staff how much he admires Josh for his ability to handle his own divorce. Joel mentions he is glad he is able to be there for his mentor.

Mentors need to be careful about the type of personal information they share with their mentees. When disclosing personal information, mentors need to ask themselves: What purpose does it serve to share this information? Am I doing it because I need the support?

- When self-disclosure is done in the appropriate context and to a limited extent, it can be a powerful way to connect with youth and build trust.
- A mentor's primary responsibility is to be supportive of the youth and listen to their concerns. The motives for sharing should always be youth-centered, not self-centered.
- The specifics of a mentor's personal life, or the intricacies of their marriage, may be information that can be shared with other adult friends, but not with a youth.
- Mentors should be careful not to shut down communication by talking about personal experiences instead of listening first. If a mentee asks, "Did you drink when you were a teenager?" an appropriate response would be to say, "Are you asking because you are wondering what age it is OK to drink?" This approach might prompt the youth to think about their own life and concerns. Youth often take their cues about acceptable behaviors from what adults around them have done. In this example, an admission that the mentor did drink as a teenager may serve as an okay for the mentee to do so. Alternatively, the admission could cause loss of the mentee's trust/respect.
- Remember that asking your mentee questions that begin with "who," "what," and "how" can help them to explore more fully the values and beliefs that are important to the mentee, rather than blindly following the example of adults. For example, you might ask your mentee questions such as these:
 - **Who** else would be a good resource person for you to talk through such an important question?
 - **What** are your values and beliefs that will guide you in making this choice?
 - **How** would you feel about yourself if you decide to . . . ?

Boundaries with Parents/Families

The reality of your mentee's family may be quite different from your own. These differences can provide insights into why a youth coming from a particular family may react to situations in the way they do. Be very careful not to judge these differences.

- The mentor's role is not to try to be a parent or take over the parent role.
- The relationship is between the mentor and mentee – not the parents or other siblings.
- Mentors should discourage personal disclosures by the mentee's parent, whether about the youth or about other family problems.
- It is important that the mentee always be present during any contact the mentor has with other family members. Mentors should not give reports on the mentee to the parent or listen to a parent's complaints about their youth.
- Remember to use the school facilitator as a resource if your mentee's parent wishes to direct the mentoring relationship or establish a close relationship with you as mentor.

Adapted from Preparing Participants for Mentoring, Department of Education Mentoring Program's Guide to Initial Training of Volunteers, Youth, and Parents, 2006.

School Boundaries

The physical property of the school provides the physical boundary for your mentor meetings. School-based mentoring provides the safest way for community volunteers and youth to enter into a mentoring relationship. **A mentor should never have a mentee to their home or in private settings.**

The TeamMates Mentoring Program's insurance and liability coverage rests upon the fact that mentoring takes place at the school. Meetings outside of school may only occur in a TeamMates sponsored group setting, requiring a permission form that must be obtained from and approved by the Lincoln TeamMates office. *Failure to complete this form may result in the termination of your mentoring relationship.*

Mentors can show their support by attending extracurricular activities in which their mentee participates (such as music concerts, school plays, sports events, etc.), as long as these activities take place on school grounds. It does not have to be the school the mentee attends.

Confidentiality/Non-Disclosure Acknowledgment

I acknowledge and confirm that in my position as a mentor in the TeamMates Mentoring Program and for my chapter (TeamMates), I may acquire information about administrative and financial matters relating to TeamMates and about donors, mentors, mentees and their parents that may be intended to be kept confidential (the "Confidential Information"). Such information, for example, might include names and addresses of donors, donation amounts, background checks of mentors and medical, mental health and academic information about mentees and their families.

I acknowledge that Confidential Information relating to mentees and their families, if disclosed could expose TeamMates to liability and could also adversely affect the mentee. I further acknowledge that Confidential Information not relating to mentees, if disclosed, could also expose TeamMates to liability, adversely affect TeamMates and undermine its mission and competitive advantage.

If I am an employee of a private or public school I acknowledge and agree that I am bound by and will abide by the school's policies and procedures relating to Confidential Information. In addition, I will not disclose the Confidential Information to any person not associated with the school or TeamMates, unless required by law or unless I have obtained the consent of the mentee and the mentee's legal guardian should the mentee lack legal capacity to provide such consent; and as to Confidential Information about donors and mentors, their consent. If I am not an employee of a school, I will not disclose the Confidential Information to any person not associated with TeamMates unless required by law or unless I have obtained the consent of my Chapter Coordinator.

I realize that any breach of confidentiality will be considered a "for cause basis" for my dismissal/termination from my position with the TeamMates Mentoring Program. I further understand that my acknowledgements herein apply both during and after my association with TeamMates and shall survive termination of my employment or association with TeamMates.

Recognizing, Responding To, and Reporting Child Abuse

Child abuse is a serious problem in American society. The information provided here is a summary of national definitions of abuse found at childwelfare.gov.

By recognizing indicators of abuse and promptly reporting suspected abuse, mentors can increase the protection of children and youth.

What is child abuse? It is generally classified as:

- Any act or failure to act on the part of a parent, caretaker or other adult which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or
- An act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

How can I tell if a child has been abused? Each child reacts to abuse differently. In physical abuse, injuries to the child might be evident, but with any kind of abuse, children often give only behavioral clues. Mentors should be alert to changes in their mentee's behavior. Any abrupt change in behavior that is maintained is a sign that the mentee is experiencing stress. This could stem from a variety of causes—including abuse. If you notice this kind of change in behavior, you should consider seeking help for your mentee by talking to the school's TeamMates Facilitator. Some of the specific signs for each kind of abuse are listed below.

Physical abuse is defined as inflicting injury on a child/youth by other than accidental means, thus causing harm. A child who has been physically abused might exhibit suspicious injuries which are different from those normally associated with childhood "wear and tear."

Burns. Burns that might indicate a child has been abused include cigarette burns. Dry burns leave distinctive marks in the shape of the instrument used to inflict them. In child abuse cases, these include electric irons, radiator grates and stove burners.

Bruises. Bruises of different colors, indicating infliction of injury at different times and in different stages of healing, often indicate abuse. This is particularly true if the bruises are on the abdomen, back or face.

Lacerations and abrasions. Children often have scraped knees, shins, palms, or elbows – predictable injuries. When children have lacerations or abrasions in soft tissue areas, such as on the abdomen, back, backs of arms and legs, or external genitalia, it is a strong indicator of physical abuse.

Fractures. Unexplained fractures are cause for concern. A child with multiple fractures is almost certain to be a victim of abuse. Other signs include swollen or tender limbs, twisting fractures, and spinal fractures caused by jerking of the arms.

Emotional abuse is defined as a pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth, and can include constant criticism, threats, rejection etc. The indicators of emotional abuse are hard to detect. Some possible signs are depression, hostility, difficulty concentrating, self-destructive behavior (such as cutting) or other vague physical complaints.

Sexual abuse is defined as any sexually oriented act, practice, contact or interaction in which the child/youth is used for the sexual benefit of another. The best evidence that a child has been sexually abused is that the abuse is witnessed by someone. Sexual abuse most frequently comes to light when a child purposefully or inadvertently reveals what is occurring.

Physical evidence of sexual abuse might include pain in the genital area or difficulty walking. Some physical evidence is more ongoing, including an increase in physical complaints (headaches, stomachaches and abdominal pain), as well as sexually transmitted diseases.

The *behavioral signs of sexual abuse* are likely to be more conspicuous and present themselves for longer periods of time. Specific behaviors related to child sexual abuse are an age-inappropriate understanding of sex; reluctance to be left alone with a particular person; persistent and inappropriate sex play with peers or toys; prostitution; wearing lots of clothing, especially to bed; drawings of genitalia; fear of touch; abuse of animals; nightmare or night terrors; poor peer relationships; anxiety-related illnesses; secretive talk in and about relationships; and poor self-concept and depression.

Neglect is defined as the failure of a parent, guardian, or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs. Standards for neglect vary widely and may be influenced by culture, poverty, and standards of care in a community. When a family fails to use resources and information available to them and the child's health/safety is at risk, it's neglect, and includes:

- Physical: failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision
- Medical: failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment
- Educational: failure to educate a child or attend to special education needs
- Emotional: inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs

What should I do if I notice any of these signs?

Do not jump to any conclusions. The signs of child abuse are often ambiguous; they can mean something other than child abuse. You should not make any accusations. Remember that your role is not to investigate or draw conclusions, but to report what you have observed to the school facilitator, counselor, or other appropriate personnel.

What should I do if I my mentee is being abused?

How an adult responds to a child/youth who tries to disclose abuse can influence the outcome of the child's victimization.

- Remain calm. Try not to appear shocked, alarmed, or disgusted.
- Actively listen to their story at their own pace without interruption.
- Ask Minimal Facts Questions. Examples:
 - What happened? What happened next? Then what happened?
 - What does that mean? Explain that to me. Tell me more.
 - Where/when did this happen? (Don't suggest places or times)
 - Who did that? (Don't suggest people)
 - How come...(insert the child's/youth's words for what happened or what the alleged perpetrator did)
Note: This should not be asked about a sexual abuse allegation.
 - Is this person an adult?
 - Does this person live with you/stay with you/take care of you?
- Never suggest/offer a name or action(s) that the person may have done.
- Avoid leading questions, such as:
 - Did your dad do that to you?
 - That's some bruise! Who hit you?
 - How many other times has he done that?
 - You have food in your house, right?
 - No one was home with you last night?
 - Did your mom's boyfriend touch you?
- Don't take photographs or videos. It is not your job to collect evidence.
- Reassure your mentee that you are concerned about what happened and that you would like to get help. Don't make any promises.

Report the concern to the school facilitator, counselor, social worker, or administrator before you leave the school. They will provide the DHHS Child Abuse Hotline number and/or the non-emergency police number and provide support as you call.

It is the LAW that you report all cases of suspected abuse. Confidentiality does not prevent a mentor from disclosing information or evidence of a harmful situation regarding your mentee to the appropriate people. Also, **the law requires only that you have a reasonable suspicion** that a child/youth is being abused. The professional staff at the Department of Health & Human Services are trained in the skills and resources to best help your mentee. If you suspect or are told of abuse, you are REQUIRED by Nebraska law to report the abuse.

Nebraska Hotline Number: 1-800-652-1999

Your report is confidential. Please inform your TeamMates school facilitator of the situation, but understand they cannot report for you.

Mentors also need to report any information they have that a child/youth might harm others or themselves. This includes involvement in illegal or harmful behavior. Address concerns through the school facilitator, guidance counselor, or other appropriate personnel.

It is important to contact the Lincoln TeamMates office as soon as possible after any report is made so that the incident can be documented on an Incident Reporting Form. We also want to support you and your mentee through this time.

TeamMates has a **Safety and Ethics Hotline number, 1-888-788-7727**, that is available to anyone involved in the TeamMates program, including mentees, families of mentees, mentors, school staff or TeamMates staff, to report any issues they do not feel comfortable with regarding safety or ethics. All reports are confidential and will be taken seriously.

Signs of Depression and Possible Suicide Risk

As a caring adult, who has regular contact with a young person, mentors may receive information from teens dealing with depression that might be indicators of self-harm or thoughts of suicide. Below are some possible signs to be aware of.

- Talking About Dying -- any mention of dying, disappearing, jumping, shooting oneself, or other types of self-harm. ***"I wish I was dead."***
- Recent Loss -- through death, divorce, separation, broken relationship, loss of job, money, status, self-confidence, self-esteem. ***"I hate my life."***
- Change in Personality -- sad, withdrawn, irritable, anxious, tired, indecisive and apathetic.
- Change in Behavior -- can't concentrate on school, work, routine tasks.
- Change in Sleep Patterns -- insomnia, often with early waking or oversleeping, nightmares.
- Change in Eating Habits -- loss of appetite and weight, or overeating.
- Fear of Losing Control -- going crazy, harming self or others.
- Low Self Esteem -- feeling worthless, shame, overwhelming guilt, self-hatred. ***"Everyone would be better off without me."***
- No Hope for the Future -- believing things will never get better; that nothing will ever change. ***"I might as well kill myself."***

Other things to watch: suicidal impulses, statements, or plans; giving away favorite things; previous suicide attempts; substance abuse; making out a will; arranging for the care of pets; extravagant spending; agitation; hyperactivity; restlessness or lethargy.

TeamMates Tip: Never leave your mentee alone if they make any of the statements listed above. Take your mentee to your school counselor immediately.

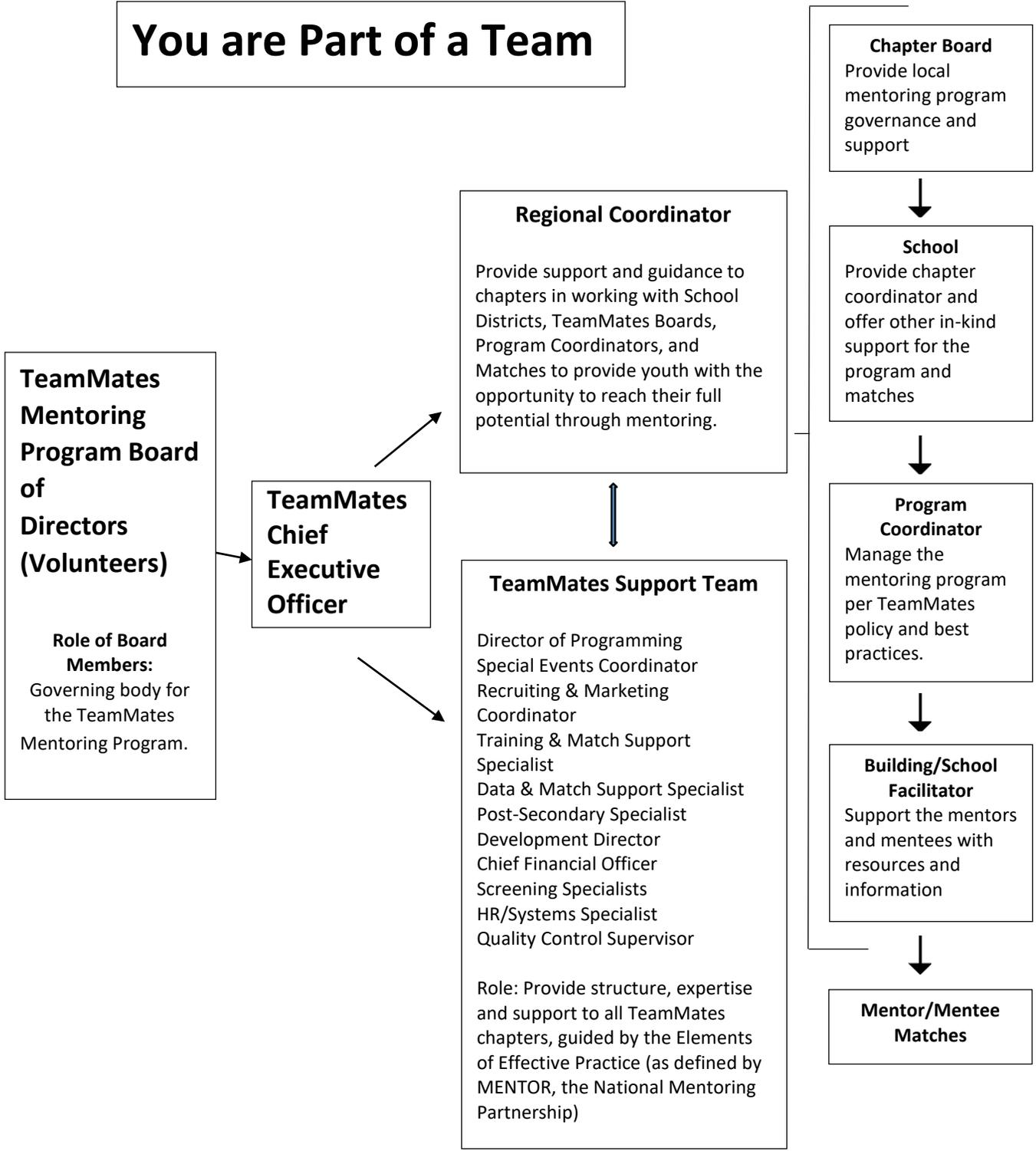
Guidelines for Difficult Situations

Regardless of the real-life situations that mentors might encounter, there are a few guidelines that apply in most cases. Several suggestions are offered below to guide mentors as they interact with mentees in difficult situations.

- **Face the problem.** Ignoring it won't make it go away. If a problem is really a problem, it's best to deal with it early before it gets bigger.
- **Think beforehand about what you want to accomplish in dealing with a sensitive issue.** For example, do you want only to know whether or not your mentee is aware of a behavior and its consequences, or do you want to impose your viewpoint? Do you want to change your mentee's behavior? Knowing your purpose helps keep things focused.
- **Bring things up early in a visit.** Don't wait until the end of the visit or for an "opportune time" to present itself. There is probably never a good time to bring up a hard topic, and so it's best to get to it right away.
- **Separate the behavior from the person.** Speak objectively about the behavior and positively about the person. For example, "I like your energy, but when you do _____ it puts me in an awkward position."
- **Don't overdo humor, teasing, or jokes.** A teenager will not always grasp serious issues that are presented in a half-joking manner. The best guideline is to stay serious but supportive; don't tease or joke; save humor for lighter times.
- **Discuss sensitive issues in a quiet place, if possible.** A quiet space helps your mentee focus on what is being said and avoids embarrassment in front of others. You may even want to take a walk to talk.
- **Reinforce at a later time something positive about your mentee.** Emphasize that the issue was about behavior and not about the mentee's worth as an individual.
- **Consult your TeamMates School Facilitator for support and guidance. Remember that you have a team of people to support you!**

Adapted from: A Training Guide for Mentors, Smink

You are Part of a Team



Quick Summary of Policies

Questions or Concerns about TeamMates:

School Facilitator: _____ Phone: _____

Program Coordinator: **Jim Bennett** Phone: **(402) 436-1990**

TeamMates Commitment: Average mentorship is 2.8 years, 24+ meetings each year

Meetings with my mentee take place through the school unless it is a planned group event *with completed paperwork and approval*. Individual meetings outside of school are not allowed.

Check in and out with the Secured Entrance Monitor (SEM) every time (and/or sign-in booklet) – not only to ensure safety but to celebrate your 24+ meetings!

Always trust your gut and report. Contact your facilitator and see training manual for policies on child abuse or neglect.

TeamMates Safety and Ethics Hotline: 1-888-788-7727 **DHHS Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-652-1999**

Gift giving is not allowed within TeamMates policy – gifts change the dynamics of the relationship. The policy is also a safeguard of our program (protecting other mentors and mentees).

Providing a meal is not allowed. You may bring your own or buy a school meal and eat with your mentee.

Honor confidentiality – you are building trust with your mentee. Do not share any photos or identifying information about your mentee.

Your TeamMates relationship is face-to-face. Meetings are through the school and communication is through the school. Do not connect with your mentee via social media, text, phone or email.

Safe boundaries within TeamMates protect mentees, mentors, and the integrity of the entire program.

Match support and meeting ideas can be found at **LincolnTeamMates.org** or by calling the TeamMates office at 402-436-1990.

Participate in one learning opportunity a year. In addition, mentors are required to complete a new background screening and attend a mentor renewal training session every three years.

Activities

Getting Started: Meeting the Mentee

Mentors may be a little nervous or unsure before meeting their mentees. The mentees probably experience some jitters, too. Mentors should take the initiative to make the first meeting as comfortable as possible.

The following are suggested ideas for the first meeting:

- **Greet the youth with a smile.** Introduce yourself and tell your mentee how you want to be addressed. Ask your mentee if they have a nickname and the name that they prefer to be called.
- **Ask your mentee for a tour of the school.** Walking and talking feels more comfortable for most young people than sitting and talking.
- **Review the Mentee/Mentor Agreement.** Talking about the elements of the agreement enables you and your mentee to acknowledge the guidelines and boundaries for the relationship.
- **Express the desire to be a friend.** Explain that you will regard everything your mentee shares with you as confidential, unless it is about something that might be harmful in any way, because your mentee's safety and well-being come first.
- **Do not pepper the mentee with questions.** Too many questions can feel like an interrogation. Plan on telling things about yourself, your family, and your work.
- **Use Icebreakers.** Utilize the "First Day Interview" or "I Like, You Like" worksheets to break the ice.
- **Play a game.** Start with a game that doesn't take much concentration so you can talk while you play. This can reduce the awkwardness of a first meeting.

End the first session on a positive and encouraging note. Make plans for meeting again the following week. First meetings can feel awkward and uncomfortable, but don't get discouraged. Give the relationship time to grow. When you keep your promise to meet at school each week, it helps your mentee to feel confident of your commitment and to develop trust in you.

Adapted from: Adams, S.W. (1998). *Handbook for Mentors*, Chesterfield, VA: Communities in Schools of Chesterfield.

First Day Interview

How is your name spelled?	
How many brothers do you have?	
How many sisters do you have?	
What do you like about your brothers or sisters?	
What do you like to do in your free time?	
What is your favorite subject in school?	
What is your least favorite subject in school?	
Who is your best friend?	
What is your favorite food?	
What is your favorite color?	
What is your favorite movie?	
What is your favorite TV show?	

Make two copies, one for you and one for your mentee to fill out.

Conversation Topics for Introducing Yourself

Take turns asking each other to fill in the blanks.

BASIC STUFF ABOUT ME

My full name is . . .

I was born in (country, city, state, province, or town) . . .

My birthday is _____, and I am _____ years old.

I've lived in some of these places . . .

One of my favorite things to do is . . .

My least favorite thing to do is . . .

When I was younger, I enjoyed . . .

I spent a lot of time . . .

When I was younger, the person I liked to be around was _____

because _____

One adult who valued and accepted me was _____

Our relationship was _____

One of my best days was the day . . .

One of my worst days was the day . . .

School for me is/was . . .

Some of the people I like to be around include . . .

My favorite ice cream flavor(s) . . .

Three more things I love to eat . . .

Music I like to listen to . . .

Names of the people who live with me . . .

Some things I like about where I live are . . .

Some things I like about being the age I am are . . .

This is how I'd describe my relationship with my parent(s) or guardian(s) . . .

More than anything, I believe young people today need (list) . . .

Parents and other adults need to try to understand that young people . . .

When I think about my life today,

I sometimes wonder if . . .

I sometimes fear . . .

OUR NEW FRIENDSHIP

I'm interested in getting to know you because . . .

I'm looking forward to . . .

Some of the feelings or questions I have about my role in our friendship include . . .

To make our times together fun and interesting for both of us, I'm willing to . . .

When I look back on this experience a year from now, I hope I'll be able to say that I helped you to . . . (list)—and that you helped me to . . .

Adapted from *In Good Company: Tools to Help Youth and Adults Talk*; copyright © 2001 by Search Institute. This handout may be reproduced for educational, noncommercial uses only (with this copyright line). From *Mentoring for Meaningful Results: Asset-Building Tips, Tools, and Activities for Youth and Adults*. Copyright © 2006 by Search Institute; 800-888-7828; www.search-institute.org.

This is ME

Today I feel _____

When I graduate from school I want to _____

I get angry when _____

My idea of a good time is _____

I wish my parents knew _____

School is _____

I feel bad when _____

I wish teachers _____

On weekends, I _____

I hope I'll never _____

I am at my best when _____

I feel proud when _____

I like to read when _____

When I take my report card home _____

I sometimes worry that _____

People think I _____

I wish I could _____

If I could go anywhere it would be _____

If I could be anything it would be _____

I Like...		You Like...	
Camping		Camping	
Puzzles		Puzzles	
Drawing		Drawing	
Coloring		Coloring	
Finger Painting		Finger Painting	
Flying Kites		Flying Kites	
Movies		Movies	
Jumping Rope		Jumping Rope	
Listening to Music		Listening to Music	
Making Jewelry		Making Jewelry	
Making Models		Making Models	
Painting		Painting	
Dancing		Dancing	
Acting		Acting	
Playing an Instrument		Playing an Instrument	
Reading		Reading	
Biking		Biking	
Horseback Riding		Horseback Riding	
Roller Skating		Roller Skating	
Sewing		Sewing	
Water Skiing		Water Skiing	
Snow Skiing		Snow Skiing	
Swimming		Swimming	
Visiting Friends		Visiting Friends	
Talking on the Phone		Talking on the Phone	
Shopping		Shopping	
Watching TV		Watching TV	
Playing Video Games		Playing Video Games	
Playing Cards		Playing Cards	
Playing Board Games		Playing Board Games	
Collecting		Collecting	
Baseball		Baseball	
Basketball		Basketball	
Football		Football	
Softball		Softball	
Hockey		Hockey	
Soccer		Soccer	
Volleyball		Volleyball	

Activities for Elementary Students

Activities for this age group vary widely, and doing more than one activity during the mentoring time can be a good idea. There are many outstanding websites for mentors to reference; reach out to your school contact for more ideas. You can always find activity ideas on the Lincoln TeamMates website, LincolnTeamMates.org, as well as Pinterest (follow TeamMates Mentoring).

- **Ask your TeamMate what they like to do.**
- Play games that support curriculum (Scrabble, Chess, Trivia, Mancala, and Password).
- Eat lunch together and play a game, read or talk.
- Ask the student about a favorite book or movie.
- Write postcards to friends or relatives.
- Offer help in completing missed assignments.
- Read a book together.
- Use appropriate magazines to create a collage.
- Use the computer to research areas of interest to your mentee or for educational activities.
- Bring pictures of family members or pets.
- Write to major businesses like Hershey, Disney, General Mills, Microsoft or Berkshire Hathaway and request information about the business.
- Write to the author of a favorite book. Ask the school media specialist or city librarian for addresses or look them up on their website.
- Plan an imaginary vacation using MapQuest.
- Make jewelry.
- Work together on writing an article about mentoring and submit it to the local TeamMates School Facilitator.
- Talk about personal hobbies or collections.
- Take photos of activities you do together throughout the year and create a scrapbook.
- Collect old greeting cards and use the cover page to do an art project.
- Construct models.
- Put puzzles together.
- Practice introduction skills by shaking hands.
- Write to a pen pal in a state or country that is part of a social studies unit.
- Do research on a favorite topic---vacation, chocolate, holidays.

Activities for Secondary Students

- **Ask your TeamMate what they like to do.**
- Keep a journal.
- Research and talk about famous people who used their abilities to get ahead.
- Make greeting, get well, or holiday cards to give to other people.
- Bring a board game.
- Look at a map and talk about places you would like to visit.
- Look at magazines or read the newspaper, including the want ads.
- Attend a school concert or school activity together.
- Keep a planner/calendar and set personal goals.
- Play sports in the gymnasium.
- Work on the computer in the media center.
- Use post-it notes to write down all the things you...
 - Like about yourself
 - Like to do
 - Would like to learn how to do, etc.
- Write stories together.
- Do a jigsaw puzzle on a reusable mat.
- Take a walk outside around the school.
- Build a model.
- Plan an activity with another pair of TeamMates.
- Bring in a photo album, and share pictures of your family, house, and pets.
- Discuss favorite hobbies.
- Read the same book and talk about your favorite parts.
- Write a letter to a former teacher, a cousin or relative in another community, an old friend, the editor of a local newspaper, etc.
- Tell your TeamMate about your work and how you reached your position. Complete a resume together.
- Give your TeamMate a job application to complete.
- Offer interviewing ideas and discuss proper dress codes for work.
- Work together on a budget.
- Discuss the college selection process and entrance examinations.
- Ask the questions for the driver's license test.
- Discuss the latest news at school.
- Listen.

Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset

By the time we reach adulthood, most of us have formed certain beliefs about our abilities, skills, and talents. These beliefs often vary wildly, based on our upbringing, values, and personal experiences and, unfortunately, as adults we rarely revisit our assumptions.

Growth Mindset: People with a growth mindset think of their potential as something that can be developed - more like a muscle. They understand that when people put in effort and challenge themselves, their potential can grow, just like when people put in effort at the gym and, by lifting heavier weights, make their muscles stronger. In fact, researchers discovered that the greater the challenge, the greater the growth!

Fixed Mindset: People with a fixed mindset think of their potential as fixed - kind of like eye color. They believe that people are born with a certain amount of potential, and they cannot do much to change that.

How might a growth mindset in young people affect the way they approach school?

Growth Mindset: Students with a growth mindset approach school differently than students with a fixed mindset. They have different goals in school. The main goal for students with a growth mindset is to learn.

- Students with a growth mindset will ask questions when they don't understand something, because they know that's how they'll learn. Students with a growth mindset view effort as the way to learn, the way to get smarter.
- Given that students with a growth mindset try harder in school, especially in the face of a challenge, it's no surprise that they do better in school.
- Students with a growth mindset actually like challenges. Challenges provide an opportunity to learn, to help learners develop their intelligence.

How might a fixed mindset in a young person affect the way they approach school?

Fixed Mindset: The main goal for students with a fixed mindset is to show how smart they are or to hide how unintelligent they think they are. This makes sense if they believe that intelligence is something they either have or don't have.

- Students with a fixed mindset avoid asking questions when they don't understand something, because they want to preserve the image that they are smart or hide that they're not smart.
- Students with a fixed mindset view effort negatively. They think, "If I have to try, I must not be very smart at this."
- Students with a fixed mindset, when faced with a challenge or setback, will give up because they think a setback means they're not smart.

One Powerful Word: Yet

Take a minute to think about three things that you cannot do. These can be work-related, health-related, or even related to how you interact with others and build relationships.

Think about some of the statements you might hear from your mentee:

- I don't know how to make friends
- I am not good at math
- I don't have the grades to get into college
- I can't kick the soccer ball from the corner

Here is that powerful word: **YET**. Take a look at those mentee statements again. They all sound much better and less intimidating with the simple addition of the word "yet" at the end.

Yet implies that something is achievable. *Yet* puts people back in charge of their future. *Yet* hints that there is work to be done in order to get to the desired place.

Yet can make things sound less fatalistic and more optimistic. *Yet* equals possibility - without it, those statements, and the person who believes them, are set in stone.

Moving Beyond "Yet"

Always follow up a "yet" statement with a phrase like this: "Let's figure out what we need to do to get there." This lets your mentee know that there are steps to be taken and ideas that can be tried, while also letting them know that they have your support for the journey.

Impact of Growth Mindset

Youth with a growth mindset:

- Do better in school and other areas of life that require perseverance, self-reflection, and good decision making
- Retain their confidence when faced with challenges
- Are more open to taking risks and going beyond their abilities
- Are more resilient when they make a mistake or suffer a setback
- Emphasize learning and their development more than "showing off"

Growth Mindset Tool: Relationship Strategy Box

A strategy box is a tool that can help people think about the strategies they have used in the past to learn new skills and overcome challenges, reinforcing that they have the ability to improve and identifying approaches that have worked in the past that they can apply to current challenges. As an example, the strategy box here can help mentors reflect on things they did to form strong relationships with others that they can apply to their work as mentors so as to form stronger relationships with their mentees. Working through this exercise may give you some ideas of how to use the Strategy Box with your TeamMate. A blank template is provided on the next page.

Instructions:

A Strategy Box has four quadrants. In three of the quadrants, list three strong relationships you have with others (try to include relationships that perhaps you struggled with at first or relationships with other young people). In the fourth, list your mentoring relationship. Next, list the most important strategies, actions, or beliefs that helped you form those strong relationships. What were your success factors? How did you progress through the challenges? What actions did you take? How did you adapt as the relationship changed over time? List as many as you can.

The last step is to see if any of these relationship strategies could be applied to your mentoring relationship. One example might look like this:

<p>Gary (dad)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play golf together all the time • He listens to me • I call once a week • Always laugh and tell dumb jokes 	<p>Rhianna (friend)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brunch! (we love to eat) • Email/text many times a week • Was strong for me when mom passed away
<p>Andrew (friend)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend sporting events together • Take long walks and talk • Took dance class together 	<p>Pamela (mentee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet weekly • Spend time together talking and listening • Try a new craft • Play a board game

Strategy Box for My Mentoring Relationship

<p>Existing Strong Relationship:</p> <p>How I made it strong:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Existing Strong Relationship:</p> <p>How I made it strong:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Existing Strong Relationship:</p> <p>How I made it strong:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/>	<p>My Mentee:</p> <p>Strategies to borrow from other boxes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/>

Strengths-Focused Mentoring

The TeamMates Program takes a strengths-focused approach to mentoring. This allows mentors and mentees to spend their time identifying and focusing on the unique talents and "good" in the mentee, instead of focusing on weaknesses, or what is "wrong." Building strengths in a student will lead to an increased sense of well-being and engagement in school.

These strengths-focused habits create advantages for both the mentor and mentee:

- A focus on individual talents and strengths
- Opportunities to honor each other's unique talents
- Helping mentee understand and use natural patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior
- Prompting mentee to look forward to seeing their mentors
- Increasing mentee's overall level of hope

Other ideas with a strengths basis include:

- Games with strengths in mind:
 - Jenga – use Sharpies to write strengths-based questions on each piece, prompting strengths discussions.
 - LIFE – use your strengths as strategy in this classic game or for sharing goals.
 - In A Pickle – play with your strengths and creative thinking with outrageous scenarios.
 - Encore – reinforce your strengths in music.
 - Qbitz – work as a team, using your strengths in this thinking game.
 - MindTrap – challenge your thinking skills. Use your strengths to win!
 - Farkle – explore this classic dice-rolling, risk-taking game. Can you utilize your talents?
 - BoomBoom for Teens – change the world in four easy steps. Use these cards for intentional acts of kindness.
- Bird house kits – design a bird house with your combined talent themes.
- Simple science kits – utilize your strengths and science skills.
- Sketch pads and drawing pencils – write about, draw about, think about your strengths.
- Origami kits – designs that highlight your strengths.
- Journaling – write each week about how you have recently used a strength. Come up with journal entry ideas.
- Read *How Full Is Your Bucket*, a book by Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer. Talk about what enables your mentee's bucket to be full, and how he or she can help others to have "full buckets." When our "buckets" are full, we feel great.

If you want to change a kid's life for the better, get them excited about the future.

- Dr. Shane Lopez

Developmental Assets

The *40 Developmental Assets* describe positive skills, experiences and opportunities that help young people grow into caring, confident adults. The more assets young people report experiencing, the more apt they are to succeed in school and live positive lives, and the less likely they are to participate in high-risk behaviors such as drug use, violence, and early sexual activity. Assets can protect young people from negative social behavior and promote positive behaviors.

When adults make deliberate efforts to help young people increase the number and degree of Developmental Assets they experience in their lives, they help the young person build assets. In order to support asset building, mentors need to *shift their focus from fixing problems to promoting strengths*. A key to asset building is to build a strong relationship with your mentee.

Developmental Assets are divided into two areas with four categories each: the External Area has the categories of Support, Empowerment, Boundaries & Expectations, and Constructive Use of Time and the Internal Area has the categories of Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, Social Competencies, and Positive Identity.

Some of the assets that you will help strengthen by just being a mentor are the following (taken from the chart on the following page):

3. **Other Adult Relationships** – In your role as a mentor, you are another nonparent adult providing encouragement and support to your mentee.
5. **Caring School Climate** – By meeting your mentee in a school, you are able to reinforce that school is a positive caring place for students.
14. **Adult Role Models** – By being consistent, by being a good listener and by showing you care, as a mentor you are providing responsible behavior and being a good role model.
16. **High Expectations** – Encouraging mentees to do well and showing them how they can do well is one of a mentor’s roles, thus helping mentees to have high expectations.
24. **Bonding to School** – Mentors can be instrumental in helping their students obtain a more positive outlook on school, which may contribute to their commitment to learning.
32. **Planning and Decision Making** – Mentors have tools (the SODAS Method of problem solving on page 62) that can help mentees make good choices and develop plans.
37. **Personal Power** – Mentors, by building a close personal relationship with their mentees, assist them in all of the “Positive Identity” assets. Mentors invite mentees to decide what they will do during their time together, reinforcing personal control for the mentee.
38. **Self Esteem** – Mentors, by believing in and supporting their mentees’ strengths, can help to improve their mentees’ self-esteem.
39. **Sense of Purpose** – After mentors have spent consistent time with their mentees, talking about their future plans, they can help their mentees with a sense of purpose.
40. **Positive View of Personal Future** – Mentors help their mentees with reviewing plans for post-secondary education, thus helping them become more optimistic about their future.

Search Institute is a research-based institute focused on helping young people. To get more information on Developmental Assets you can go to their website: search-institute.org

40 Developmental Assets™

Search Institute™ has identified the following building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.



Category	Asset Name and Definition	
External Assets	Support <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family Support-Family life provides high levels of love and support. 2. Positive Family Communication-Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents. 3. Other Adult Relationships-Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults. 4. Caring Neighborhood-Young person experiences caring neighbors. 5. Caring School Climate-School provides a caring, encouraging environment. 6. Parent Involvement in Schooling-Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school. 	
	Empowerment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Community Values Youth-Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth. 8. Youth as Resources-Young people are given useful roles in the community. 9. Service to Others-Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week. 10. Safety-Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood. 	
	Boundaries & Expectations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Family Boundaries-Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts. 12. School Boundaries-School provides clear rules and consequences. 13. Neighborhood Boundaries-Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior. 14. Adult Role Models-Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior. 15. Positive Peer Influence-Young person's best friends model responsible behavior. 16. High Expectations-Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well. 	
	Constructive Use of Time <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Creative Activities-Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts. 18. Youth Programs-Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community. 19. Religious Community-Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution. 20. Time at Home-Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week. 	
	Internal Assets	Commitment to Learning <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Achievement Motivation-Young person is motivated to do well in school. 22. School Engagement-Young person is actively engaged in learning. 23. Homework-Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day. 24. Bonding to School-Young person cares about her or his school. 25. Reading for Pleasure-Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
		Positive Values <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 26. Caring-Young person places high value on helping other people. 27. Equality and Social Justice-Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty. 28. Integrity-Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs. 29. Honesty-Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy." 30. Responsibility-Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility. 31. Restraint-Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
		Social Competencies <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 32. Planning and Decision Making-Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices. 33. Interpersonal Competence-Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills. 34. Cultural Competence-Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds. 35. Resistance Skills-Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations. 36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution-Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
		Positive Identity <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 37. Personal Power-Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me." 38. Self-Esteem-Young person reports having a high self-esteem. 39. Sense of Purpose-Young person reports that "my life has a purpose." 40. Positive View of Personal Future-Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Sparks

Every youth has a spark – something that is good, beautiful and useful to the world. A spark is more than just a passing interest or a talent; it's a passion! It's what unleashes your energy and joy, gives your life purpose and focus, and allows you to make your own unique contribution to the world.

The following suggestions may be helpful as you consider how you can help your mentee to identify and develop their sparks.

- Ask your mentee about their spark and why it's energizing. Ask about your mentee's thoughts on issues in your community, the nation, the world. Listen.
- Give your mentee time if their sparks have yet to be identified. It is OK that your mentee is still exploring many options and interests.
- Mentors who believe in their mentees, even when their mentees may not yet believe in themselves, inspire hope and confidence. Expect a lot of your mentee, knowing that, with the right support, your mentee will usually rise to the occasion.
- Help your mentee figure out the next little step for moving forward. Youth may not know what to do next to voice their concerns or nurture their sparks. Help your mentee think through options and figure out next steps.
- Challenge negative perceptions when you hear them. Adults and other youth may belittle a young person's interests as impractical or trivial. Youth need allies to stand up for them.
- Find out what gets in your mentee's way when they are stuck. Listen and help figure out a way around the problem.
- Introduce your mentee to new interests and issues. Expanding your mentee's horizons is an important part of helping them to be well-rounded. Having multiple talents and interests is better than having one.
- At the same time, help your mentee prioritize and focus. Sometimes mentees can get caught up in trying so many things or tackling so many issues that they get overwhelmed or discouraged. Learning to make choices and focus is an important life skill.
- Support your mentee every step of the way. Cultivating sparks and finding one's voice can lead in unexpected directions. As you build your relationship, encourage your mentee's growth and development. Celebrate your mentee's successes and the fulfillment that comes from finding one's own voice and passions on the journey into adulthood.

Adapted from "Fifteen Actions to Support 15-Year-Olds," outlined in Best Buy's *Teen Voice 2009: The Untapped Strengths of 15-Year-Olds* based on the Sparks and Thriving research of the Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN

Setting and Reaching Goals

Goal setting can enhance the mentoring relationship when:

- A foundation of trust is established;
- The goals are youth driven; and
- All involved feel good about the process.

Mentors can help their mentees assess the success of their goal-setting efforts and help identify obstacles and steps to overcome them. It is important to celebrate successes as they occur.

The following guidelines can be used when creating goals. Think of the acronym **SMART** for your goal setting.

S is for *Specific*.

Goals should be stated so the steps to complete them become obvious. “Having lots of money” is too general. “Save \$100 dollars over the next three months” is more specific.

M is for *Measurable*.

A goal should have a time and built-in marker for success. For example, “Fill out *three* job applications by the end of the week” Is a goal that can be tracked (wherein your mentee can actually count and document the goal’s completion) versus “Look for a job,” which does not provide a way to document achievement of the goal.

A is for *Achievable*.

Mentees need to consider their personal strengths as they set goals. Goals set outside of the ability of the youth will only set the mentee up for disappointment. For instance “To have the lead in the school musical” is generally not achievable if the mentee cannot carry a tune!

R is for *Realistic*.

Many youth aspire to what they see on media in terms of not only occupation, but also appearance. By coming up with the specific steps it would take to reach a goal, the youth can better determine whether or not it is realistic.

T is for *Time*.

Goals should include a time frame so they can be measured for success along the way. “Graduate” is certainly a goal, but “Graduate from high school with my class” better meets the requirements for goal setting. “Graduate from high school with my class in 2021” is even better!

Problem Solving The “SODAS” Method

One of the major obstacles that mentees face is learning to make good, rational decisions. Often youth simply do the first thing that comes to mind or follow what everyone else is doing, instead of examining their situation and thinking logically about their choices and the possible consequences of those choices. Using the SODAS method can help your TeamMate develop problem-solving skills.

Situation

Look at the situation and *describe the problem in detail.*

Options

List at least *three ways to solve the problem.*

Disadvantages

List at least *three disadvantages of each option.*

Advantages

List at least *three advantages of each option.*

Solution

Select the *best option* based on the advantages and disadvantages.

This method helps to examine problems in a rational way that is easy to remember. For most of us, this process seems very simplistic, but many young people have never had the guidance of a trusted adult and do not know how to look at situations realistically. Systematic problem-solving is something that can be taught. Rather than simply giving your mentee advice, helping them to practice using this skill will support your mentee’s ability to solve problems throughout life.

(Developed by Jan Rosa, 1973)

Mentoring Resources

TeamMates Mentoring Program: LincolnTeamMates.org

Mentor Resource Library: TeamMates.org/for-mentors

MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership: mentor.org

A website dedicated to the national mentoring effort. Good general information on mentoring and ideas for National Mentoring Month can be found at this site.

The Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring: chronicle.umbmentoring.org

A source of useful information that mentors can use to help them support their mentees.

National Mentoring Resource Center: nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org

A technical assistance publication about a number of mentoring topics. They can be downloaded and printed free of charge.

Mentoring Matters: What Every Mentor Needs to Know (2015). Tom Osborne—one of TeamMates' founders—weighs in on why and how mentoring impacts young people.

Stand By Me (2000). Jean Rhodes, Professor of Psychology and the Director of the Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring at the University of Massachusetts Boston, discusses research on mentoring programs and the elements of successful mentoring relationships.

Mentoring for Meaningful Results: Asset-Building Tips, Tools, and Activities for Youth and Adults (2006). Kristi Probst provides ideas that mentors may use in working with their mentees.

TeamMates Social Media

Twitter: @MentorTeamMates

Facebook: Lincoln TeamMates Mentors (private group)

Instagram: TeamMatesMentoringProgram

Pinterest: TeamMates Mentoring Program

TeamMates Post-Secondary: teammates.org/for-mentors/teammatesplus-mentoring

Education Quest: educationquest.org

A great website to access with your mentee to explore **free** college planning services, outreach services, need-based scholarship programs, and college access grants. EducationQuest has locations in Lincoln, Kearney, and Omaha, Nebraska.

Iowa College Access Network: icansucceed.org/

A source of information for high school students and their parents about the college-going process, specifically surrounding the financial aid process.

KnowHow2Go: knowhow2go.acenet.edu

A website designed to encourage students and veterans to prepare for college. Explore the site to learn more about the steps you need to take to be college-ready.

Assistance for Specific Mentee Issues

Resource	Type of Help	Contact Information
Nebraska Abuse Reporting Hotline	Contact for mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect (24 hours)	800-422-4453
Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline	Information, intervention and referrals in 170 languages (24 hours)	800-422-4453 childhelp.org/hotline
TeamMates Safety and Ethics Hotline	Concerns related to anything in the TeamMates Program	888-788-7727
The National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders	Information and support regarding eating disorders	anad.org
Partnership for Drug-Free Kids	Non-profit association that supports families struggling with a child's substance abuse	855-378-4373 drugfree.org
Crisis Text Line	Crisis Text Line support for persons in crisis with trained crisis counselor (24 hours)	crisistextline.org
Boys Town National Hotline	Crisis hotline that links callers with other sources of support (24 hours)	800-448-3000
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	Free, confidential support for people in distress: prevention and resources	800-273-8255 888-628-9454 (Spanish) suicidepreventionlifeline.org
Nebraska Family Helpline	Free resource for parents regarding children's behaviors	888-866-8660 dhhs.ne.gov/behavioral_health/Pages/nebraskafamilyhelpline_index.aspx

Middle Childhood and Adolescent Development

Children go through many changes during the period of rapid developmental growth known as adolescence.

The following chart lists typical characteristics of children's development within three general stages.

	Middle Childhood (8-11)	Early Adolescence (11-14)	Middle Adolescence (15-18)
Self-Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influenced by relationships with family members, teachers, and increasingly by peers. • Often relatively low level of concern about physical appearance (especially boys), although this is influenced by peers as well as the media. • Boys experience pressure to conform to masculine stereotype. • Girls' body image declines precipitously with puberty, especially with early onset. • Early onset of puberty is also associated with lower self-control and emotional stability, especially for boys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-image can be challenged by body changes during puberty and social comparisons. • Youth begin long-term process of establishing own identity separate from family. • With puberty, normal increases in girls' body fat can impact body image and self-concept negatively for many. Both boys and girls might be concerned with skin problems, height, weight, and overall appearance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process of identity formation is intense. Experimentation with different roles: looks, sexuality, values, friendships, ethnicity, and especially occupations. • Some girls might experience obsessive dieting or eating disorders, especially those who have higher body fat or who have highly conflicted family relationships. • Minority youths might explore several patterns of identity formation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- a strong ethnic identity -- bi-cultural identity -- assimilation into or alienation from the majority culture
Relationship to Parents & Other Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tends to be closely attached to parental figures. • Parents commonly make most decisions, affecting child, with child involvement in decisions increasing with age. • Most frequent conflicts over sibling quarrels and forgetfulness with respect to chores, schoolwork, and messiness, especially of child's bedroom. • Parental listening skills become increasingly important. • Parent-child communication patterns can change with puberty. Many adolescents report that they can't talk with parents about issues related to sexuality, and they don't get needed information in sex education courses at school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in own and parental expectations alter previous patterns of relationships with parents, often resulting in greater conflict. • Greater focus on peer friendships as youth develops an identity outside of the role of a child in a family. • Often rebuffs physical affection (but still needs it). • Increased interest in making own decisions; benefits from increased opportunities to make own decisions within scope of current abilities. • Youth objects more often to parental limitations (but still needs some), resulting in conflict. • New thinking abilities are practiced in increased use of humor and arguments (or "talking back") with parents/other adults, which may result in conflicts. • Parental listening skills and nurturing continue to be important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict with parents often decreases with age. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Improved ability to see parents as individuals and take their perspectives into account. -- Most maintain good relationship with parents. • Greater interest in taking on "adult-type" responsibilities (own checking account, doing own laundry, buying own clothes, cooking meals, making repairs, etc.). • Commonly makes most of own decisions, preparing for eventual family. • Needs balance between time spent with adults and with peers. • Continue to benefit from some parental limits and monitoring, while often objecting to them. • Common conflicts over money, curfews, chores, appearance, and activities with peers.
Peer Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendships often with same-gender peers, usually based on proximity, common interest/hobbies, or other perceived commonalities. Girls usually have fewer, but emotionally closer, friends than boys. • Formation of exclusive "clubs" and shifting peer alliances common. • Media influences and popular culture increasingly impact children's peer activities and relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes due to puberty and peer reactions commonly alter peer relationships. • Friendships still begin with perceived commonalities, but increasingly involve sharing of values and personal confidences. • Might develop cliques of three to six friends (usually same gender), providing greater sense of security. Antisocial cliques can increase antisocial behaviors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peers help youth explore and develop own identity. • Cross-gender friendships become more common. • Antisocial peer groups can increase antisocial behaviors. • Close friendships help youth with process of developing an individual identity separate from that of a child in a family.

Adapted from Middle Childhood and Adolescent Development, Oregon State University, Extension Service.

TeamMates Mentoring Program Important Contact Information

TeamMates mentors are part of a team! As questions arise, remember that the first line of contact is the facilitator and staff at the school where you are mentoring! Your school facilitator will provide their contact information on the School Orientation Form which you will receive when you meet your mentee for the first time.

While your school facilitator is your primary contact, if you have any questions or concerns not addressed by your facilitator, please reach out to the appropriate Match Support Specialist listed below. Our Program Coordinator is always happy to assist and support mentors as well.

Elementary Match Support Specialist:

Stacey Blizek | (402) 436-1990 | sblizek@lps.org

Middle School Match Support Specialist:

Audrey Watson | (402) 436-1990 | awatson2@lps.org

High School Match Support Specialist:

Angee Dostal | (402) 436-1990 | adostal@lps.org

Program Coordinator:

Jim Bennett | (402) 436-1947 | jbennett@lps.org

LincolnTeamMates.org

